

REMARKS

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 through 7, 9 through 14, 16, and 17 are pending, with Claims 1 and 12 being independent. Claims 8 and 15 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, and 12 through 14 have been amended. The specification has been amended.

Claims 1, 2, and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 over U.S. Patent No. 5,786,851 (Kondo, et al.). Claims 2 through 11, 13 through 15, and 17 were objected to and indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. All rejections are respectfully traversed, and are submitted to have been obviated by the amendment of the claims to, among other changes, incorporate objected-to Claims 8 and 15 into Claims 1 and 12, respectively.

The dependent claims are also submitted to be patentable because they set forth additional aspects of the present invention and are dependent from independent claims discussed above. Therefore, separate and individual consideration of each dependent claim is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that this application is in condition for allowance, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our address listed below.

Respectfully submitted,

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